Safety and security have always been a priority for the nation's transit agencies. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has consistently emphasized the responsibilities of transit providers to help keep our communities safe and moving. Today's transit environment is complex and constantly evolving. There are heightened threat concerns involving both criminal and terrorist behavior that have required the focus on safety to expand to include transit security even for the smallest transit agency. Hurricanes, fires, storms and floods have increased the awareness of the role public transit can play in supporting emergency response efforts. Now is the time to enhance our efforts and increase our focus to make sure that we are continuously strengthening our Nation's transportation system.

Know Your Goals

What are you hoping to accomplish? Are you starting from scratch and need to develop an entire program or are you looking for a few specific resources to fill in gaps? Or perhaps you want to discover if you have any gaps in your program. It is a good idea to define the purpose of your visit to the resource website.

Building a strong and effective safety, security and emergency preparedness program is not a goal that can be achieved quickly or without a lot of work. But it is a goal that can, through strategic thinking and with access to technical assistance resources, be successfully accomplished. Specific steps in goal achievement include assessing your existing program strength's and gaps, prioritizing your gap-filling activities and accessing information to fill those prioritized gaps. The FTA Bus Safety and Security Program website was designed specifically to assist you in this important process.

Benefits

There are many benefits of using a strategic and prioritized approach. First, the management of your time and effort is rewarded. Second, your access to industry guidance and best practices is magnified. Third, the quality of your program is incrementally yet steadily improved. Finally, and most importantly, the safety and security of your employees, customers and community are enhanced.

Things to avoid

The creation of a comprehensive and effective safety, security and emergency preparedness program is by no means an easy accomplishment and there are many pitfalls to avoid along the way. Things to avoid when approaching this challenging mission include:

1. Doing nothing because it is all too overwhelming.
2. Waiting for an accident or incident to happen before addressing the need.
3. Underestimating the importance of being proactive instead of reactive.
4. Working in isolation without access to the guidance and work of others.
5. Believing it is a one-time endeavor instead of an ongoing process.

These "getting started" materials include program background information, suggested meeting agenda topics, as well as a schedule template to help you identify and document your strategy to move forward. While we hope you will spend time on the Resource Website to build and strengthen your program, we understand that this must be a shared effort, one that involves everyone in your organization. Safety and security has to be everyone's top priority.

We hope that these materials will help you address any safety, security, and emergency preparedness needs in your agency!